ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

646 who is in full possession of all his citizenship rights and can read and write the Albanian language, may be elected as a deputy.

641 All citizens are equal before the law and their citizenship and political rights secured.

425 Confiscation of property is definitely abolished.

659 The State recognizes no official religion, all religions are equal and have full rights and receive equally favorable treatment in every respect.

641 Foreigners enjoy equal rights with Albanian citizens, except they cannot vote nor hold parliamentary and certain other offices.

645 The official business of the State is carried on by the eight Ministries, namely: Ministry of Interior Affairs (Ministria e Punëve të Brëndëshme), Ministry of Justice (Ministria e Drejtësisë), Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme), Ministry of Public Instructions (Ministria e Arësimit), Ministry of Finance (Ministria e Financave), Ministry of National Economy (Ministria e Ekonomisë Kombëtare), Ministry of Public Works (Ministria e Punëve Botore), and Ministry of National Defense (Ministria Komonda e Përgjithshme e Mprojtjes Kombëtare).

[Constitution]

641 554 No privilege because of family, position in life, wealth, or cultural level is recognized.

ARTICLE 13

[563] [659] All citizens are equal regardless of nationality, race, or religion. Any act which grants privileges or takes away rights from any citizen because of nationality, race, or religion is unconstitutional and carries with it punishments as provided by law. It is unconstitutional and punishable by law to stir up hatred and dissension among nationalities, races, or religions.

ARTICLE 14

666 641 All citizens who have reached the age of eighteen are eligible to elect and be elected in all organs of state, regardless of sex, nationality, race, creed, cultural level, or residence.

Members of the armed forces also have these rights.

The right to vote is universal, equal, direct, and secret.

The right to vote is forfeited by those who have been disqualified by law.

ARTICLE 15

562 Women are equal to men in all walks of life, private, political, or social.

Women shall receive the same pay as men for the same work. And women have similar rights with regard to social security.

745 The government especially protects the interests of mothers and young children, by assuring vacations with pay before and after childbirth and also by building maternity hospitals and nurseries.

ARTICLE 16

659 Freedom of conscience and religion is guaranteed to all citizens.

The church is separated from the state.

Religious communities are free to exercise and practice their creeds.

It is forbidden to use the church and religion for political purposes. 659

Likewise, political organizations based on religion are also forbidden.

The state may assist religious communities materially.

ARTICLE 17

Marriage and family are protected by the state. The legal conditions of marriage and family are fixed by law. 585

Legal marriages can be performed only by competent representatives of the government. After celebrating a civil marriage a citizen may celebrate a religious marriage according to the rules of his creed.

The courts of the state only are competent to determine all questions concerning marriage. [692]

Parents have the same obligations towards their illegitimate children as to those born in wedlock. Illegitimate children have the same rights as those born in wedlock. [848]

ARTICLE 18

Freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of organization, freedom of assembly and of public demonstration. are guaranteed to all citizens. 641

ARTICLE 19

Personal inviolability is guaranteed to all citizens. Nobody can be arrested for more than three days without a court warrant or without the approval of the district attorney. 671 641 [694]

No person shall be punished for a crime without the decision of a competent judge in conformity with the law which defines the crime and the competence of the court

No punishment shall be determined and inflicted except as prescribed by law.

No person shall be punished without a hearing nor without being summoned to defend himself according to law, except in a case where his absence is legally established

The administrative organs of the state may give jail sentences for common law misdemeanors as prescribed by law.

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one surmise that the Communists have tried to neutralize the Moslem population by breaking it up into mutually hostile factions. It is known that purges of Mohammedan leaders who were insufficiently cooperative have occurred. Islam is today divided into several sects. Hoxha's aides sought first to play one of these against another, and selected the strongest, the *Bektashi*, for the role of principal collaborator; but there ensued a weird series of assassinations, or purges, impossible to interpret. All we really know is that government broadcasts beamed to the Near East stress that Albania demonstrates the ability of Communism to carry out its program successfully while granting complete freedom of faith to Mohammedans. The names of some Moslem leaders who have perished are known, as is that of Hafiz Musa Hashi Alija, who is currently cast in the precarious role of chief adviser to the government on Islamic matters.

News concerning the fate of the Orthodox Church is also much more fragmentary than one could desire. Historically, in Albania, this Church was free of strong confessional ties with Constantinople and Athens, and from time to time some of its leaders took under serious advisement the possibility of reunion with Rome. Accordingly Communist efforts after 1945 to "nationalize" Orthodoxy and to foster its allegiance to Moscow met with resistance. It was not until January, 1948, that a small delegation of the clergy visited Moscow, Kiev, and Leningrad. The official press reported that the head of this group had expressed, in behalf of his colleagues, the view that the "strength of the Russian Church" would insure protection against "all the other Churches, and particularly the Vatican," which might seek to "absorb and destroy the Albanian Church." During the same year, a Russian bishop visited Tirana, Albania's capital city; and the Orthodox Church Conference of that year convened in Moscow. This

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conference, it will be remembered, condemned both the Protestant Ecumenical Movement and the Vatican, "center of Fascism and of plots against the Slavic peoples." 795 653

The fact that the Primate, Archbishop Christopher Kissi, did not attend any of these assemblies was strongly indicative of a lack of appreciation for Communist conceptions of the role and functions of the Church. Indeed, it would have been strange if he had attended. The Orthodox Church, like all other religious bodies in Albania, had suffered from the Land Reform Law promulgated during August, 1945, which gave the Party the right to confiscate and nationalize property it has claimed elsewhere. By the close of 1948, Moslem and Orthodox ecclesiastics were completely dependent financially on the state. During the next year, the Archbishop was deposed and arrested. The government's published contention was that he "had worked against our interests and the interests of the people by collaborating with the Unitarian Church during the period of Fascist occupation." Two other prelates, Bishop Ireneo and Bishop Agathangjeli, were arrested. How many other members of the clergy have been taken into custody, deported to labor camps, or executed, no one knows. There is a report that Bishop Irenaeus Banushi was put to death during 1947. 793 661 [423]

However, the full fury of Hoxha's enmity fell upon the Roman Catholic Church. The Germans had withdrawn in November, 1944. A month later the government seized all printing establishments, and the Catholic press was abolished. At the same time a number of ecclesiastical offices were searched, and some members of the clergy were taken into custody. Religious youth organizations were banned, and only the Anti-fascist Youth Front, avowedly pro-Communist, was permitted to function. In February, 1945, the first "People's Court" to convene in Scutari sentenced one of the best known Al- 795 661 [883]

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795 banian writers, the Reverend Lazarus Shanjoha, to death. He
661 had favored close ties of friendship with Italy for many years, and so the sentence was ascribed to the National Liberation Front's fanatical detestation of all things Italian, and not to antireligious prejudice.

●659 Ilya Ehrenburg, major Soviet propagandist, visited Al-
668 bania during the November of 1945. Upon his return to Mos-
687 cow he described Scutari, more than half the population of which was Roman Catholic, as a vicious hotbed of reaction. At the time of his visit the city was preparing for its first post-war elections. A handful of students at the diocesan seminary for the training of priests circulated mimeographed sheets urging that the recipients vote against the National Front. These sheets bore the signature of the "Albanian Union." Spurred on by Ehrenburg's denunciation, the government jailed and tortured some of the distributors. They revealed the names of the seminarians, who as a matter of fact constituted the complete membership of the Albanian Union. A spectacular trial of those held guilty of having plotted to overthrow the State with the help of "Anglo-American imperialists" became in reality a forum before which the Catholic Church was indicted for high treason. The Rector of the seminary and one of his fellow Jesuits were accused of responsibility for the conspiracy, found guilty, and executed. Others received heavy prison sentences. Nowhere else had a court acted more grimly.

659 The liquidation of virtually all Catholic activities followed
798 swiftly, with more cruel and vengeful treatment of the clergy
661 than has been witnessed even in Hungary and Yugoslavia. The Papal Nuncio was expelled, as were all priests and religious born in Italy. Education was reserved to the State, even nursery schools being taken from the Church. Catholic Action was suppressed. The seminaries were closed. Ecclesias-

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tical property was deeded over to "the people," and the priests who were permitted to remain in office were restricted to one room in their rectories. The only Catholic bishop who is thought to have survived lives in an isolated mountain village. By the close of 1948, virtually every widely respected and well educated priest had been executed or imprisoned. Francis Gjini, Bishop, Abbot, and Albanian representative of the Papal Nuncio; George Volaj, Bishop of Sappa; Matthias Prennushi, Provincial of the Franciscans—all were put to death. Vincent Prennushi, Archbishop of Durazzo, died in prison.

Under this reign of terror, the Catholic population of approximately 100,000 was reduced to dire poverty, impotence, and silence. The laity suffered almost as grievously as the clergy. Catholics holding positions of public trust were ousted. Priests were forbidden to minister to the sick in hospitals or prisons. To consort in any way with a priest meant probable imprisonment or worse. By the middle of August, 1951, Catholics who still ventured to practice their religion openly were served by not more than sixty-two priests. On the third day of that month, the government published a decree concerning the status of the Roman Catholic Church. This document, having announced that the Church no longer "has any kind of organizational, economic, or political ties with the Pope," went on to ordain that the clergy must accompany religious teaching with the inculcation of sentiments of loyalty to the "people's power of the Albanian People's Republic," and that appointments to ecclesiastical positions must have the approval of the government. This decree was approved at a convention of Catholics meeting in Scutari in 1951. At the same time the government announced that Catholicism in Albania had repudiated all forms of allegiance to the Papacy, "enemy of the people."

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659 671 The legal status of religious establishments was clarified by a law dated November 26, 1949. The principal stipulations were these:

All clergymen or lay officials must be approved by the State; and any who act illegally "must be dismissed from their posts immediately."

Any communication addressed to the public by a Church official—speech, message, or pastoral letter—must be submitted in advance for censorship.

The education of youth is conducted by the State, and "religious institutions have nothing to do with it."

Religious orders were not to assume management of any hospital or other charitable institution, or to possess real property.

795 661 Measures taken against the Catholic minority were so brutal that even Communist functionaries protested. At a Congress of the People's Party, held on March 31, 1952, General Hoxha sternly upbraided Tuk Jakova, one of the principal Communist Party leaders, for questioning the wisdom of the persecution. Hoxha's words, as reprinted, read in part:

> Comrade Tuk Jakova, disassociating himself from the political program of the Party and of the State in so far as religion and in particular the Catholic clergy are concerned, has not evinced the right attitude toward this clergy or acted against it vigorously. Not seeing the very grave danger which is present in the reactionary clergy, Comrade Jakova has not hated them in an adequate way.

It would therefore appear that while Mohammedanism has been spared the full rigors of the antireligious crusade in Albania, the Christian Churches have suffered as perhaps nowhere else in satellite Europe. Bereft of leadership and of education, depleted through violent death, deportation to labor camps, and escape to other countries, they have been reduced to a status almost as primitive as that of the Churches